

The First Texas Academy of Science

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Lack of an historical sense is the bane of many workers in the domain of Science. It is otherwise in non-scientific scholarly fields. No student of the humanities would believe himself qualified to publish papers in a given field without previous historical study and mastery of its literature. Such a scholar would say that only thus can he see his particular ideas in their proper perspective; only thus can he learn to avoid experimental cul-de-sacs and elaborate techniques when simple ones suffice; only thus can he avoid that worst of scholarly vices, the learned demonstration of the obvious. Some students of science rush to futile "investigations," when a little forethought, a little scanning of the literature, would show that the proposed experiment is not crucial, or that the desired observations have been made, or results obtained, by previous workers.

Often there is shown the most surprising lack of knowledge of previous workers or movements. A distinguished Texan archaeologist once confessed to me his complete ignorance of the former existence of the "Archaeological Society of Austin"¹ (founded 1876); and another, a student of the history of agriculture in Texas, was unaware of the existence of the "Texas State Agricultural Society," which published a volume of *Transactions* in 1853, at Austin.²

¹The "Archaeological Society of Austin" was founded in October, 1876 at Austin. The first president was Louis Jarrel Dupré (1828-94), at that time editor of the *Austin Statesman*, (as he previously had been of the *Saint Louis Times* and the *Memphis Appeal*, and later should be of the *Birmingham News*). Dr. John William Stalnaker (1831-83) was secretary. Swante Palm (1815-99), who needs no introduction to Texans, was another member of the Society. It is hardly possible that a frontier learned society could better have been sponsored than by these three. Dupré was a graduate of the University of Alabama (A.B., 1847) and Cumberland University (LL.B., 1857); Palm was Swedish vice-consul in Austin (1866+), a Knight of the Vasa order, and member of numerous Swedish learned societies. Stalnaker took his M.D. degree at the University of Pennsylvania in 1855. From 1885 to 1889, Dupré was U.S. Consul to San Salvador. It is probable that the life of the Archaeological Society of Austin did not extend much beyond 1883, the year of Stalnaker's death.

²The "Texas State Agricultural Society" was organized at Austin in the spring of 1853. Dr. Ashbel Smith was the first (and only) president. An octavo pamphlet of *Transactions* (24 pp., including a nine-page address [5F53] by the president) was the sole publication of the Society. In the 1858 *U.S. Patent Office Report (Agriculture)*, 23 agricultural societies, one agricultural-mechanical society, and no horticultural societies were reported from Texas. Only one of these, the "Bellville Agricultural Society of Austin County" (*org.* 1Ja.58 with 25 members), made a report to the Commissioner of Patents (then in charge of Agriculture).

The matter of the Texas Academy of Science is another illustration in point. This was organized in 1892 (as we at the present know it) at the University of Texas, and continued active for twenty years (until 1912), having in the meantime published twelve volumes of *Transactions*. It then ceased its activities and became extinct (like the Texas State Horticultural Society, which existed from 1875 to 1922.) In 1929, the present Texas State Academy of Science was reorganized by five men, and has continued its activity to the present time.

Dr. Edgar Everhart,³ graduate in chemistry of the University of Freiburg (in Baden), then professor of chemistry of the University of Texas, is sometimes spoken of as "founder" (1892 of the Texas Academy of Science. Certainly, he was the first president of the Academy (9Ja92-19Je94). The idea of an academy probably was seminal with him, but in the founding of the Academy he had as colleagues George Bruce Halstead, Alexander Macfarlane, Frederick W. Simonds, and Thos. U. Taylor (professors, respectively, of mathematics, physics, geology, and applied mathematics, and for many years active members of the Academy). Dr. Everhart left Texas in 1894, to accept a university post elsewhere; and with his departure, severed his connection with the Academy, to whose founding and early establishment he had, in a brief period of two years, made substantial contributions. Of the factors which brought about the demise of the Academy in 1922, I shall here make no mention, for that is another story.

I have been told that the re-founders of the Academy in 1929 were unaware of the existence of the earlier organization, and at first approached the matter as "something new, heretofore overlooked and unthought of in Texas." This idea certainly is a misapprehension. In the "letters of incorporation" of the new academy, mention is made of the old one, and the numbering of the volumes of the proceedings continued that of the *Transactions* of the earlier academy. Moreover, J. K. Strecker of Baylor University, one

³Edgar Everhart (1854-1932) was born in Stokes County, N.C., 8Ap54, and died in Atlanta, Ga., 8Ag1932. He was a student of Fresenius, and took his Ph.D. degree at Freiburg in 1878. He was Associate Professor and Professor of Chemistry at the University of Texas (1884-1894), and chemist of the Georgia State Geological Survey (19: 4-30). *Biographical materials: American Men of Science*; New York Times, 9Ag1932, p. 17, c. 2.

of the incorporators of the 1929 academy, had in 1901⁴ published a paper in the *Transactions* of the old academy, and therefore certainly was aware of its former existence.

The 1892 academy was not, however, the first Academy of Science in Texas. On October 27, 1880, there was founded at Austin the "Texas Academy of Science",⁵ by Samuel Botsford Buckley⁶ and Dr. Quintius [*sic*] Cincinnatus Smith⁷ (both of Austin), and Dr. Franklin L. Yoakum⁸ of Palestine. At the first meeting of the Academy there were elected as members, Governor O. M. Roberts,⁹ Lieutenant Governor J. D. Sayers, State Treasurer Francis R. Lubbock,¹⁰ Land Commissioner William C. Walsh and his chief-draftsman, Charles William Pressler,¹¹ Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Micajah Hubbard Bonner,¹² State Senator John Y. Gooch, of Palestine, and a number of other state officers. Governor Roberts was elected president of the Academy. "This was a mistake," said Dr. Yoakum, six years later, "the 'statesmen' did nothing for science, and the existence of the Academy was purely nominal." Dr. Yoakum and S. B. Buckley decided about 1882 to remove the Academy to Palestine, "where a number of men inter-

⁴J. K. Strecker, "Reptiles and batrachians of McLennan County, Texas." (*Trans. Texas Acad. Sci. for 1901*, v. 4, pp. 95-101.)

⁵F. L. Yoakum, "The Texas Academy of Science—its history and growth." (*Texas Farm & Ranch*, 1D86, p. 5.)

⁶Samuel Boisford Buckley (1809-83). Biographies in *DAB*; *ACAB*.

⁷Dr. Quintius Cincinnatus Smith (1842-1911). Born in Tennessee, early self-educated. He took his M.D. degree from the University of Nashville (1868), and after several years of practice in Tennessee, Missouri, and California, practiced in Austin (1880-1905). He was a member of numerous scientific and medical societies. His interest in science was almost universal: "botany, organic chemistry, electricity, microscopy, morphology, embryology, ethnology, herpetology, taxonomy." (*Cassino's Directory, 1886, 1888*.) See *Who's Who in America*, v. 5, 1908, p. 1760.

⁸Dr. Franklin L. Yoakum (1819-91). For biographical data, see S. W. Geiser, *Horticulture and Horticulturists in Early Texas*, 1945, s.v. "Yoakum."

⁹Oran Milo Roberts (1815-98). For biographical data, see *DAB*. Roberts was an interested amateur in natural science, and a devoted agriculturist. In the *Southern Farmer*, v. 4, 1870, pp. 193-94, he published an interesting account of "The Grasses of Texas," descriptive of the native species that covered the State, before Texas became agriculturalized.

¹⁰Francis Richard Lubbock (1815-1905.) For biographical data, see *DAB*. Lubbock was one of the pioneer poultry breeders of Texas (especially of Asiatic breeds.) See F. R. Lubbock, *Six Decades in Texas*, 1900, pp. 236-37.

¹¹Charles William Pressler. For many years (...1851-80...) connected with the Texas Land Office and Chief Draftsman from at least 1857 until his retirement. He was one of the incorporators of the "German Free School Association" of Austin (15Ja58), and a prominent member of the Austin *Gesangverein*. His "Map of Texas" (with W. Voelker) was issued with George M. von Ross's *Der nordamerikanische Freistaat Texas* (1851), and he published "Pressler's Map of the State of Texas" (on a scale of sixteen miles to the inch) at Galveston in 1858.

¹²Micajah Hubbard Bonner (1828-83). "Father of the Shumard Geological Survey of Texas." In 1856, he drafted a resolution to provide for a State Geological Survey. Later, he became (1878) an associate-justice of the supreme court of Texas. A native of Greenville, Ala., he came to Texas in 1849, locating in the practice of law, first at Marshall, then at Rusk, and finally at Tyler (where he died, 28N83.) He was a man of wide interests, as witness: an incorporator of the Houston & Great Northern Railroad, the Rusk Masonic Institute, and the Southwestern University.

ested in natural science were living.”¹³ Here it was reorganized with some thirty members. It took on new life, and the membership swelled to one hundred members, resident in all parts of the State.¹⁴ Some of them, like Thomas Volney Munson¹⁵ (Denison), Edwin T. Dumble¹⁶ (Houston), Dr. Edmund Montgomery¹⁷ (Hempstead), Dr. William Rapp Howard¹⁸ (White Rock), and Dr. Q. C. Smith (Austin) became members of the later Academy, founded in 1892. A beginning was made of a museum collection to include natural history objects of the state. This was largely that which Dr. Yoakum had formed while president of Larissa College before the War, and in the years subsequent thereto.

In 1883, President Buckley died at Austin. From about 1881 until his death he had been president of the Academy, with Dr. Yoakum as secretary. The Academy seems to have lingered at several years of dying. It is included in the list of scientific societies to which the Smithsonian Institution sent its publications (1885); and in 1889, *Texas Farm & Ranch* published a paper on “The culture of silk in Texas”, by “Dr. F. L. Yoakum, of the Academy of Science, at Tyler.”¹⁹ Soon after, it disappeared from view; and it is possible that Everhart and his co-founders of the Texas Academy of Science in 1892 had never heard of the earlier academy.

No publications issued from the Academy. On Jan. 12, 1885, Yoakum wrote from Palestine to the editor of the *Texas Courier-Record of Medicine* at Fort Worth: “We will publish the first annual of the Academy of Science of Texas,

¹³*Texas Farm & Ranch*, 1D86, p. 5. Among those Palestinians interested in science may be mentioned T. T. Gammage, J. N. and N. W. Hunter, L. W. Moore, and J. H. Reagan (all lawyers), and W. R. Maxwell (an amateur geologist and paleontologist who for many years was associated with the I. & G.N. Railroad at Palestine.)

¹⁴Besides those specifically named, other *probable* members of the early Academy were Gilbert C. Heron (Corsicana), L. S. Millard (Bellville), George H. Ragsdale (Gainesville), E. F. Schmidt and Dr. E. Erlenmeyer (Houston), Dr. J. F. Joor (Birdston), W. F. Cummins (Dallas), T. W. Florer (Waxahachie), and J. M. Glasco (Gilmer). Records of the Academy are not obtainable for checking.

¹⁵Thomas Volney Munson (1843-1913.) For biographical data, see *Who Was Who in America*, DAB, and S. W. Geiser, *Horticulture and Horticulturists in Early Texas*, 1945, s.v. “Munson.”

¹⁶Edwin Theodore Dumble (1852-1927.) For biographical data, see *American Men of Science; Who's Who in America*, v. 4, 1906-07; *Bulletin of the Geological Society of America*, v. 39, 1928, pp. 18-29.

¹⁷Dr. Edmund Montgomery (1835-1911.) *Biographical materials: Southwest Review*, v. 16, 1931, pp. 200-35; DAB.

¹⁸Dr. William Rapp Howard (1848-1912.) For biographical data, see *Texas State Journal of Medicine*, v. 8, 1913, p. 184, and S. W. Geiser, *Horticulture and Horticulturists in Early Texas*, 1945, s.v. “Howard.”

¹⁹*Texas Farm & Ranch*, 1My89.

in July, fifty or seventy-five pages. If we can find any working men of Science through your journal, we want them as editors and contributors." Nothing appears to have come of this. Yoakum at that time was still secretary of the Academy.

The museum of the Academy grew apace; and when Yoakum moved from Palestine to Tyler²⁰ (about 1886) he took the collections (which were his own), together with his scientific apparatus, and such library as the Academy had accumulated, to that place.²¹ The museum was first exhibited at the State Fair of Texas, at Dallas, in 1886. The following editorial account, printed in *Texas Farm and Ranch* of November 1 of that year, has this to say: "Lovers of Natural Science, visiting the late Texas State Fair saw the very extensive exhibit made by the Academy of Science of Texas, . . . claimed to represent every known Texas mineral, bird, Tertiary fossil, marine shell of Texas Gulf shore; some 10,000 botanical specimens (by Mrs. [?J. N. or N. W.?] Hunter of Palestine), two thirds of our marine fish and crustaceans, a great many cretaceous, carboniferous, and silurian fossils and Permian minerals. The ores of Texas were completely represented. Also all the land and freshwater shells of Texas. The herpetology collection was commenced. About fifty boxes of insects which could not be unpacked on account of the illness of the entomologist, Mr. Hathaway, of Austin." All of which, while exaggerated and optimistic (we cannot claim at the present time to have a full collection of the fauna and flora, recent and fossil, of Texas), shows the extent, at least, of Yoakum's aspirations.

Dr. Yoakum died in 1891; and I do not know the final disposition of his collection. For a number of years a collection of birds, shells, and minerals lingered as a permanent collection of the State Fair of Dallas, part of the time under the nominal curatorship of William Fletcher Cummins.²² In 1916 this was discarded by the manager of the Fair, being thrown out bodily; and Dr. Robert Stewart

²⁰Dr. Yoakum's last *Texas Farm & Ranch* horticultural paper dated from Palestine, appeared in the 1Jl85 issue; his first dated from Tyler appeared in the 1My86 issue.

²¹*Texas Farm & Ranch*, 1D86, p. 5.

²²William Fletcher Cummins (1840-1931.) Assistant State Geologist on the Dumble Geological Survey of Texas.

Hyer, then president of Southern Methodist University, salvaged the whole, amounting to four wagon-loads.²³ There are still remnants of this collection at Southern Methodist University, in the geological and natural history collections of the University. It is possible that this material was part of the old Texas Academy of Science collections.

The foregoing will show, therefore, that the present Texas Academy of Science is the *third* of the name: the first academy (1880-87), founded by Buckley, Smith and Yoakum; the second (1892-1912), founded at the University of Texas; and the third and present, which dates from 1929.

A New Southern Spider

Sarah Jones

Examination of a collection of north Texas spiders has revealed one new species, which is here described.

***Hytia bryantae*, n.sp.**

Female. Length, 6.7 mm.; cephalothorax, 1.1 mm. wide, 2.2 mm. long; abdomen, 1.3 mm. wide, 4.5 mm. long.

Cephalothorax yellow, covered with procumbent white hairs, especially in the eye region; long white hairs on the clypeus. Scattered long, erect black hairs on thorax, more on sides below eyes, a small tuft below the anterior lateral eyes. Narrow black line on margin of cephalothorax, a slightly wider one mid-dorsally from level of dorsal eyes to end of thorax. Anterior to this line are a broader pair of dark lines in the eye region; the eyes located on black bars which extend posteriorly from dorsal eyes in a pair of broad, dark gray lines to hind end of thorax. At end of thorax are a pair of slender oblique black lines between mid-dorsal line and edges of thorax. Mandibles yellow, darker anteriorly; sternum, mouth parts, and coxae a little lighter, the endites with a dark tuft of hairs at distal and inner edges and the labium with a crescent-shaped gray mark at its basal edge. Palps white, with a pair of dark

²³*I*de Dean E. W. Shuier, Southern Methodist University, Dallas.